
Mr. *Sheffield's*
S E R M O N
F O R
Reformation of Manners.

Mr. Sheffield's

STERMON



Reform in the

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A
SERMON

Preach'd to the
SOCIETIES
FOR
Reformation of Manners,

In the CITIES of
London and Westminster.

October the 1st, 1705.

By JOHN SHEFFIELD.

Publish'd at their Request.

L O N D O N,
Printed for John Lawrence at the Sign
of the *Angel* in the Poultry, 1705.

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Preached to the

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Reformation of Manners

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London and Westminster

1707



By JOHN SHEPHERD, A.D.

Author of the *History of the City of London*

LONDON

Printed for John Lattin, at the Sign
of the Angel in the Fore-street 1707

S E R M O N

Preach'd at

Salters-Hall,

I N

L O N D O N :

October the 1st, 1705.

THE Gentlemen of these Societies have had so many Excellent and Elaborate Discourses on this general Head, *For Reformation of Manners*, that, I suppose, you can hardly expect any thing New from me, either by way of Instruction or Excitation ; only to *stir up your pure Minds by way of Remembrance* ; And even this is a very neces-

fary and valuable End for the keeping up of these Exercifes, confidering the flipperinefs of our Memories, and how apt the beft are to grow cold and remifs in things that pertain only to the Interest and Kingdom of God, and have no immediate reference to any worldly and temporal Interest of our own, as yours has not; in this cafe known Truths, that have been often inculcated, too commonly lie in our Minds, like the Infcriptions on *Old Tomb-Stones*, the Duft must be afresh blown off every time they are read; fo he that brings nothing New, yet may be of fome Use to you, by refreshing your Memories, and reviving thofe Instructions and Ex-citations you have formerly heard: I fay not this, as if I intended to Copy from any, but to advertife you, that you expect not from me, what I think not my felf capable of performing. What I have to fay to you fhall be founded on the Words of the Apostle *John*.

I John III. 8.

He that commits Sin is of the Devil, for the Devil sinneth from the beginning : For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the Work of the Devil.

1. **B**EFORE I open the Terms, I shall give you a general View of the Words : We have here represented, the *Two Heads and Leaders* of all Mankind, and their *Opposition and Contrariety* one to the other ; and these are, the *Devil*, and the *Son of God*.

2. WE have here specify'd, the particular *Matter* about which their *Opposition* one to the other doth lie ; and that is, The Devil, his constant Business is to *propagate* and promote Sin in the World ; and the principal Business of the Son of God, is to *destroy* Sin, to pull down what the Devil is building.

3. WE have the *Persons* Characteriz'd, whereby we may know them, who they

are among the Children of Men, that do abet and favour, and adhere to either of these in their Cause; *He that commits Sin, is of the Devil, he is on the Devil's side, against the Son of God.*

AND tho' it is not express'd, yet it is plainly enough imply'd, that *he that doth Righteousness, and opposeth Sin, is a Favourer and a Friend to the Son of God in his Cause; and this is express'd, both in the Verse before and following the Text: Verse 7. He that doth Righteousness is Righteous as he is Righteous. And Verse 9. He that is born of God, doth not commit Sin.*

HAVING given you a general View of the Words, it will be requisite a little to open the Terms.

Ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἀμαρτίαν, that lives in Sin, that makes a Trade of Sin, or, as the most usual Scripture Expression is, that *Works Iniquity*; and so it is distinguished from such as have Sin in them, as the best have in some degree; or that Sins through Infirmary, contrary to his aim and design; or that falls into Sin by surprize, contrary to his general

ral course ; but it is he that lives in Sin, and makes a practice of it. *Ex τῷ διαβόλῃ*, he is of the Devil, a Child of the Devil, as it is explained, *Verse 10. In this the Children of God and the Children of the Devil are manifest ; and our Saviour more plainly, John viii. 44. Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the Lust of your Father you will do.*

AND then it is confirmed by a Reason, that such are of the Devil ; for *the Devil sinneth from the beginning*. That which the Apostle designs to prove by this, is, That Sin entitles Men to the Devil ; it shews their Likeness and Imitation of him ; their Cognation and Kindred, their Alliance and Confederacy with him ; for he is the Eldest and Greatest Sinner : He *sinneth from the beginning* ; that is, from the beginning of the World ; and ever since is the great Author and Promoter of Sin among Men. The Word is in the Present Tense, *ἁμαρτάνει* not he did Sin, or hath Sinned, but he [Sinneth], noting a continued Act ; he never *ceases* to Sin ; it is his constant business to Sin himself, and to instigate others to it.

THIS

THIS being opened, there is nothing difficult in the other Branch of the Text; for that informs us, that the main and principal Design of Christ's being manifested in Humane Nature, is to destroy the Work of the Devil. As the Devil's business is to propagate and promote Sin all he can; so Christ he is counter-acting of him, and will be destroying his Work as long as the World stands.

NOW to bring the Substance and Scope of the Text into as narrow a compass as I can, I shall comprize it in these Two Propositions.

1. THAT the Devil is the Author, the Patron, and Father of Sin and Sinners; and the very Design of the Son of God being manifested in this World, is to destroy Sin; which is a direct Opposition to the Devil's Design.

2. THAT all that Live in Sin, and Promote its growth and increase, do favour and serve the Devil's Design, against God's Honour, and the Happiness of Mankind: And all that in their Places do oppose Sin, and promote Reformation, do favour and serve the glo-

rious

rious Design of the Son of God, against the Devil and his Work.

I shall handle both these together, because the narrow Limits of our Time will not admit of a distinct Handling of each by it self, and shall cast my Discourse into this Method.

1. I will more particularly explain, what is the Devil's Work, what is his *great Business* and Design that he is driving on in this World; and under this will shew, that all that live in Sin, or make a practice of it, are of his Party, are Abettors and Auxiliaries to him in his Design.

2. I will shew, that in opposition to this, the principal Design of the Son of God, in this World, is to destroy Sin; and under this, that all those that do oppose Sin, are of his Party, and do favour and serve his Blessed Design, against the Devil and his Work.

3. *APPLY* all together.

I. TO Explain what is the Devil's Work and Grand Design in this World. And this we shall apprehend more distinctly if we consider,

1. WHAT

1. **WHAT** is the principal End he aims at in all his Work.

2. **WHAT** is the principal or only Means he uses in order to this End.

S. 1. **WHAT** is the principal End he aims at in all his Work. And this is Twofold. (1.) Most principally, to Dishonour God all he can. (2.) The Misery and Ruin of Mankind.

1. **THE** principal thing the Devil aims at, is the *Dishonour* of God, because he hates God, as being totally Apostatized from him, and Punished by him, and knows that God is irreconcilable to him : His principal Malice is against God, tho' he knows he cannot hurt him ; for by the Transcendency of his Nature, he is infinitely above the reach of his Malice ; yet he may injure and wrong God, by Belying him, Blapheming him, and Robbing him of the Glory of his Works ; of that Reverence, Honour, Worship, Adoration, and Obedience, that is due to him from Mankind ; and therefore tho' he cannot hurt God, yet he will come as near it as he can, by such means as these. There is no doubt but it was his Malice against God,

God, that instigated him to his attempt against our first Patents. When God had cast him down to Hell for his Apostacy, because he could do nothing against God immediately, nor against the Holy Angels that were nearest to him, therefore he would vent his Malice against God in the Noblest Creature that lay open to his Attempts.

AND no doubt, when he had prevailed to deceive and corrupt our first Parents, and so had Poisoned the Humane Nature in the Root and Fountain of it, he thought he had for ever spoiled this lower Creation, and rendred it for ever unserviceable to God, and the Ends he made it for : That God should have no Glory from so great and noble a Part of his Works ; that he should here have no Homage and Worship paid him, but instead thereof, Blasphemy, Contempt, and Dishonour, from the Work of his own Hands ; that the Rest and Pleasure which God took in his Works, when he pronounced them all *very Good*, should be for ever disturbed, and turned into a kind of Regret that ever he made them.

AND

AND when he saw his Cunning baffled and confounded by the Wisdom of God, and his Malice overmatched by his infinite Goodness, and a Redeemer promised and given to save a lost World, and to renew the corrupted Nature of Man; this disappointing and confounding his Malice by a shameful Foyl, when he thought he had got a compleat Victory; this put a keener Edge upon his Malice than ever; for it is the Opinion of many, that the Appearing of the Son of God, in Humane Nature, to destroy his Work, has raised his Malice against God to a higher pitch than ever; and several of the ancient Fathers were of Opinion, that the Devil did not certainly know that God was Irreconcilable to him, and would have no mercy on him, till he saw the Son of God manifested in Humane Nature.

2. NEXT to his Malice against God, his aim in all his Works, is the Misery and Ruin of Mankind. Hence he is called the *Envious Man*, because he Envyies Mankind the Grace of Reconciliation with God, which is denied to him. He is called *Satan*, and *χθεις* an irreconcilable

concilable Enemy and Adversary to our whole Kind : He is said to be a *Murderer from the beginning* ; and hath his Name *Abaddon* and *Apollyon*, which signifies Destruction and Mis- chief, as being the very Plague and Ruin of Mankind, and delighting in our Destruction, and making it his very Business.

AND no doubt but his principal aim is at the Destruction of Mens Souls, that being the compleatest Misery, an utter and everlasting Destruction, a total Separation from God and all Good, an everlasting Perdition beyond hope of Recovery ; therefore it is this that the Devil does principally endeavour and delight in.

THAT Proud Spirit will stoop to serve Mens Covetousness, Ambition, and Envy, and promote the Pleasure of the Flesh, by farthering their unclean Gratifications, and seem to befriend Men in their outward and temporal Estate in this World, when he sees that by this means he can best effect their eternal Damnation in the World to come ;

come ; as he offered our Saviour the *Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them*, if he would fall down and worship him. But he delights in all kind of outward and temporal Miseries of Men ; the Pain and Torment of their Bodies, Discord and Divisions in Families, Wars, Plagues and Desolations of Kingdoms, when this will not hinder his main Design, of Ruining their Souls for ever : In that dreadful Plague, that swept away so many Thousands of the *Israelites* in a few Days, it's said, that
1 Chron. 21. 1. Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number the People.

NOW we see what is the Devil's principal aim in all his Work ; the Means that he uses in order to this End, is by being the Author of Sin, not only the first and greatest Sinner himself, but a Propagator of it to his utmost, the Promoter and Instigator of Sin in all others. This is his principal, yea his only Engine, wherewith he Militates both against God and Man, against God's Honour, and Man's Happiness. Thus he did by the Sorcerer *Balaam*, that was
his

his profest Ally, when he could not by his Divinations and Inchantments prevail to Curse *Israel*; for (says he) *God has not seen Iniquity in Jacob, nor Perverseness in Israel*; then he advised to intice the People to commit Whoredom with the *Midianitish Women*; and this proved successful, both to intice the People to dishonour God, and to provoke God to Plague the People.

Num. 31. 16.

AND if we consult the Scriptures, we shall find, that there is not any kind of Sin whatsoever, but the Devil is at one end or other of it; commonly the first Motion is from his Diabolical Suggestion; but if not, he never fails to be an Abetter and Promoter of it, by mingling his Poison before it be finished. His Agency is very great in many Sins, where it is not discerned; as in many Instances, which we should never have suspected the Devil to have any hand in, had not the Scripture told us so. When *Judas* out of Covetousness betrayed our Saviour, it is said, *the Devil put it into his Heart*. When *Ananias* and *Saphira* thought to cover their Hypocrisie and Sacrilege with a Lye, the Apostle says,

B

Why

Why hath Satan filled thine Heart to lye unto the Holy Ghost ? Nay, when Peter, out of Kindness to his Master, would have dissuaded him from Suffering, our Saviour sees the hand of the Devil in it, for saith he, *get thee behind me Satan.* When any hear the Word of Life unprofitably, so that it is not sanctifying and saving, it is said, *the Devil*

Luke 8. 12.

takes away the Seed that was sown out of the heart. When David for the Gratification of his Lust commits Adultery with *Uriah's* Wife, the Devil excited and inflamed him to it ; as many both Learned and Judicious do understand that Traveller in *Nathan's* Parable, 2 Sam. 12. 14. This was the Devil (say they) whom *David* gratified by his Sin. Therefore I conclude, that the Work of the Devil is not to be limited to any particular kinds of Sin, but doth intend all Sin, of what kind soever.

IT's true, that some Sins are more immediately and directly against God ; as Atheism and Idolatry ; and others more immediately against Men, as Cruelty, Injustice and Oppression ; some Sins are more home Thrusts, and do greater Execu-

Execution against God's Honour and Man's Happiness than others do ; but all do serve the Devil's design against both, in a greater or less degree.

SOME Sins have a more perfect resemblance of the Devil's Nature and Likeness, as Lying and Pride, Envy and Malice, and Rejoycing in the Sin and Misery of others, &c. But there are other Sins, which the Devil is not capable of committing himself, as Luxury, Intemperance, Uncleanliness, Beastiality, &c. and yet all do serve the Devil's design both against God and Man. Against God's Honour, as these tend to bring God himself, his Authority and Laws, into Contempt in the World ; and against Man's Happiness and Welfare, by Corrupting, Depraving and Brutifying the Natures of Men, and so Ripening of them for Wrath and Ruin both here and hereafter.

HAVING shew'd you who is the great Author of Sin ; I will next shew you, who among the Children of Men are his Adherents and Assistants. And these are, all that make a practise of Sin, and that promote the growth and in-

crease of it: All such do favour and serve the grand design of the Devil against God's Honour and the Welfare and Happiness of Mankind. The Text saith, he that commits Sin is of the Devil; such are on the Devil's Side and Party against the Son of God.

1. **SUCH** are the Children of the Devil by *Imitation*; they are not of the Devil, as Men, but as Sinners, as they love, and practice, and delight in Sin: They resemble the Devil in the Temper and Disposition of their Spirits, in the Aim and Tendency of their Work, as a Child resembles his Father. They promote the Dishonour of God, and the Ruin and Misery of themselves and others, as the Devil doth; and therefore herein are like him, and assistants to him in his Work: As the Apostle saith to *Elimas* the Sorcerer, *Thou Child of the Devil, and Enemy of all Righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord*, Acts 13. 10.

2. **THOSE** that commit Sin, do herein serve the Devil, are under his Influence and Government, Fulfil his Lusts, and Do his Will and Pleasure, tho

tho' it may be they think no such thing. Hence the Apostle saith, that those *who walk after the Lusts of the Flesh, and fulfil the Desires of the Flesh*, are under the Influence and Government of *the Prince of the Air, the Spirit that works in the Children of Disobedience*, Eph. 2. 2, 3. *His Servants ye are whom you obey*, Rom. 6. 16. And our Saviour to the *Jews, The Lusts of your Father you will do*, John 8.

II. I COME to consider the other branch of the Text, which is the *Opposition* of the Son of God to the Devil and his Work.

§. 1. AND here we are informed, that the very Design of the Son of God being manifested in this World, is to destroy the Work of the Devil.

AS the Devil's principal design is to Dishonour God all he can, and to Draw Mankind into Misery and Ruin with himself; so in direct Opposition to him, the principal Business of the Son of God in this World is, to vindicate and retrieve the Honour of God, and to recover and save Mankind, that was lost and undone by the Subtilty and Malice

John 8. 49, 50. of the Devil. Saith Christ,
I seek not my own Glory,
but the Glory of my Father which sent me.

Matth. 13. 11. And again, *The Son of*
Man came to seek and to
save that which was lost. Again, *The*

John 3. 17. *Son of Man came not to judge*
 12. 47. *the World, but to save the*
World. The Devil is the

Destroyer, and Christ is the Saviour
 of the World: The Devil cast the
 World into Confusion and Disorder;
 and Christ is the Repairer of it, that
 sets it in frame again.

AND both these he doth, viz. Vin-
 dicate God's Honour, and Recover Man's
 Happiness, by *destroying the Work of the*
Devil, which is Sin; by expelling Sin
 out of the Hearts and Lives of Men;
 and so restoring Man's Nature to its pri-
 mitive Dignity and Excellency, which
 consists in the Image of his Maker: By
 reducing of Man, who is the most erra-
 tick and disorderly Creature in the
 World, into a regular and orderly State,
 as is becoming of him, both towards
 God and Man. That is, into an entire
 Subjection to God, and Obedience to
 his

his Laws, as his rightful and supream Sovereign ; and unto mutual Love, and Peace, and Concord ; and in all cases, to their power, to be helpful and serviceable one to another , as becomes Fellow-Subjects.

AND so far as this design of Christ against the Devil takes effect ; the Humane Nature, and the World too, that by Sin was nothing else but Disorder and Confusion, is put into Joint and Frame again, is made serviceable to its Maker, and declares his Glory : And this Earth, that by the Prevalence of the Devil and his Work was a Stage of Injustice and Oppression, of Rapine and Cruelty, &c. so far as Christ's Design takes effect, is made a peaceable Habitation for Men, while they are passing thro' it, and preparing for that World of perfect Bliss and Glory above.

THUS to destroy the Work of the Devil, to expel Sin, to repair the Humane Nature, and so to set the disorder'd World in Frame again, is the principal Design of the Son of God being manifested in this World.

§. 2. I shall shew you how he destroys the Work of the Devil: He doth it these ways. 1. Meritoriously, by his Death. 2. Doctrinally, by the Word of the Gospel. 3. Exemplarily, by his Life. 4. Powerfully and Effectually, by his Spirit co-operating with all his Ordinances and Institutions. The three first I shall but briefly touch upon, being much better done to my hand than

*The Bishop of
Oxford's Sermon.

I can pretend to, by a very Reverend and Learned Prelate of the Church *.

1. *Meritoriously*, by his Death. Tho' this be not the first in order of Time, yet I put it first, as having a most principal Influence in Destroying the Devil's Kingdom, and Overturning his Throne. Here it was that he made full Satisfaction to the offended Justice of God for Man's Sin. Hereby it was that he made God Propitious, disarmed or took away the Curse of the Law, procured the Sanctifying Spirit of Grace to be sent down into this World again; and therefore here it was that he gave the most deadly Blow to the Devil and his Kingdom:

By

By Death he hath destroyed him that had the power of Death, that is the Devil. And on the Cross, he spoiled Principalities and Powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Heb. 2. 14.

Col. 2. 15.

2. HE destroys the Work of the Devil *Doctrinally*, by the Word of the Gospel, under which I comprehend his Laws, the Precepts and Prohibitions, his condescending and pathetick Entreaties and Exhortations, and the enforcement of them by Promises and Threatnings of Eternal Rewards or Punishments; and these are such, that, were they but believed and considered, would make all Sin appear a most frightful and abhorrent thing, when set off to the greatest Advantage, and presented in the most Enticing and Alluring Dress.

3. HE destroys the Work of the Devil *Exemplarily*, by the perfect Holiness and unspotted Purity of his Life. In him was no Sin, either in Thought, Word, or Deed: He was constantly, and in all things, *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from*

Heb. 7. 27.

Sinners.

Sinners. So that he has exemplified in his own Practice, what he requires of his Followers: He has not only taught us by his Doctrine, but by his Example too, as he has given us a Perfect Rule of Righteousness, so he has set us a Perfect Pattern too; he has gone before us, and led the way, that we might be the more effectually moved, excited, encouraged and assisted to follow him; as Examples are more moving than bare Instructions or Precepts, especially so great, and affecting, and obliging a one as Christ's is.

4. HE doth *Powerfully* and *Effectually* destroy the Work of the Devil, by his Spirit co-operating with all his Ordinances and Institutions. It is the Spirit of Christ that is the principal Agent in destroying the Work of the Devil. It is his Influence, that gives Life, and Power, and Efficacy to all Christ's Institutions, without which they would be weak and ineffectual. It is the Spirit that Christ promised to send into the World, *that convinces the*
 John 16. 8. *World of Sin, of Righteousness, and of Judgment:* It is by the Spirit that
 Men

Men are *turned from Darknes to Light,*
and from the power of Satan unto God;
 and it is by the Spirit, that
 we are inabled to *mortifie* Rom. 8. 13.
the deeds of the Body.

BUT the Spirit doth not ordinarily
 exert his Power to destroy the Work
 of the Devil, but in concurrence with
 Christs Institutions.

THE Two principal and most emi-
 nent of which are the Ministry of the
 Word, and Magistracy.

I. THE *Ministry* of the Word is the
 principal means wherewith the Spirit
 does co-operate, for the confounding of
 the Devil, and destroying his Work.
 This is an Institution most suited to the
 Nature of Man, as a Rational and Free
 Agent; and to the mild, equal, graci-
 ous and sapiential Government of God;
 therefore this is the principal Means
 whereby the Spirit doth Batter the
 Strong Holds, and Overturns the Throne
 of the Devil, and spoils him of his Ar-
 mour wherein he trusts; this is the or-
 dinary Means, whereby he enlightens
 the Mind, purifies the Heart, and cleans-
 eth the Conscience from dead Works;
 whereby

whereby he sanctifies the whole Man, Soul, Spirit and Body ; whereby he reforms the Life, renews and changes the Heart, rectifies the outward Practice, and mortifies the inward Lusts and Affections of Sin in the Soul, and so raises Temples for God on the Ruins of the Devil's Throne ; that this is the design of the Ministry, the Scripture is full

and clear ;
Acts 20. 18.

To whom I now send thee, to open Mens eyes, to turn them from Darkness to Light, and from the power of Satan to God ; and he

promises to be with the Ministry for this purpose, to
Mat. 28. 26.

the end of the World.

2. *Magistracy* : This is another of Christ's Institutions, for the destroying the Work of the Devil. That it is so, you have had it excellently and largely

proved to you : Saith the
Mr. Oldfield's
Sermon.

Mr. How's
Sermon.

Rom. 13. 1, 2.

3. 4.

Ver. 5.

proved to you : Saith the Eternal Wisdom, *by me Kings Reign, and Princes decree Justice.* The Apostle, speaking of the Magistrate, says, *He is the Minister of God to thee for good : Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only*

ly

ly for Wrath, but for Conscience sake.
 Now this Institution, tho' *superiour* to the Ministry in a *Civil* respect, yet is *subordinate* and subservient to it, in *destroying the Work of the Devil*; its Agency and Influence is confined to the outward Practice, but meddles not with the Heart; and for the restraining of open and scandalous Offences, but meddles not with mental Errours.

AND one great Use and Necessity of this Institution, in serving the Design of Christ against the Devil, is with respect, Either to those hardened impudent Sinners, that scorn the Ministry and condemn the Laws and Authority of God; and all the Instructions, Admonitions, Exhortations and Reproofs, that can be offered to them in his Name: Or with respect to those, that by Brutishness and Sensuality have drowned their Reason and Conscience, so that they are incapable of Instruction or Reformation, by any other means; but such as are applicable to their Senses.

AND yet even these we cannot say that our most merciful and compassionate Saviour has abandoned and cast off

as utterly incurable, while he continues them in this World, and within the reach of any reforming means, that are of his Institution: For he **Prov. 1. 23.** invites *Scorners to return*; and doth sometimes wash the most filthy *Swine* from their Mire; and therefore, whilst he, out of his Patience and Goodness, is pleased to continue them under any reforming means, we are bound in Duty and Charity to apply to them, such means as they are capable of.

AND tho' this should not prove effectual for their Conversion, and so not to deliver them from the power of the Devil; yet it doth in some measure serve the Design of the Son of God, in destroying the Devil's Work, if it effect no more than the preventing and restraining many *Acts* of Sin; for the more Sin there is in the World, the more is the Devil gratified and pleased, and his Work succeeded: And the restraining and suppressing of Sin in any degree, is so far a check to the Devil, and a defeating of his Malice.

BUT especially, the preventing and restraining of open and scandalous Sin
and

and Sinners, doth serve the Design of Christ against the Devil, as it hinders the Contagion from spreading, so far and so fast, for the Infection of others, as otherwise it would do. And as, in case of a Contagious Plague, it is necessary for the good of the City, and the particular Inhabitants, that Infected Houses be shut up, and Infected Persons restrained from going abroad, that if they be not cured themselves, yet they may be kept from infecting of others: Why, Vice and Profaneness, by reason of its suitableness and connaturality to the corrupted Nature of Man, is more contagious, more spreading and infectious than any Pestilential Disease. *Evil Communications corrupt good Manners.* Take heed lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. Heb. 12. 15.

2. THEREFORE all that in their places do oppose Sin, and promote Reformation, do favour and serve the glorious Design of Christ against the Devil and his Work. It is not needful to say any more for the proof of this, than what is said under the former Head.

There-

Therefore I shall only suggest this to you, That as Parents, Masters of Families, and all private Christians, are bound in their Places, and to the utmost of their Capacities, to assist the Ministry in their Work, wherein they are to serve the design of Christ against the Devil: By Chatechizing, Instructing of Children and Servants, and Reproofs; Admonition, Exhortation, and Provoking one another to Love and Good-work, as Opportunity offers it self: So all without exception are bound in their Places to contribute their Assistance towards the restraining and conviction of open and scandalous Offenders; and so to assist the Magistrate in his Work wherein he is to serve the design of Christ against the Devil. And were it not so, I know not how this Institution of Christ could be of any considerable use, to serve Christ in the grand Design that he is carrying on in this World.

FOR if none should be convicted or restrained from scandalous Offences, but such as do the Devil's Work under the Magistrate's Eye; then either Magi-

strates

istrates must be so Numerous as would bring that Honourable Order into contempt, or else Magistracy and Laws too must be rendred useleſs and vain, as to any conſiderable Service they are like to do, Chriſt and his Intereſt in the World.

AND tho' the Son of God does not need the Service of any, to aſſiſt him, and promote his deſign of deſtroying the Work of the Devil; yet in infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs he will uſe the Endeavours of all his faithful Servants and Followers in this Work, and does require and expect it of them. *Partly*, To put the greater Honour upon his Servants. *Partly*, To exerciſe and increaſe the Holy and Godlike Diſpoſitions he has wrought in them. *Partly*, That hereby they may manifeſt and prove their Love, and Zeal, and Fidelity to him, and his Intereſt and Cauſe in the World. *Partly*, That they may the more teſtifie to the World, their Repentance and Shame, that they themſelves have ſometimes ſerved the Devil, and diſſerved the Intereſt and Cauſe of Chriſt in the World. *Partly*, For the greater

Confusion and Disgrace of the Devil, when Christ makes those whom he had overcome and ruined (as he thought) to be instrumental in trampling down him and his Work. And *Partly*, For the greater encrease of their glorious Reward in the Life to come.

I Come now to make some closer Improvement of what has been said.

§. 1. To Sinners themselves. If those that commit Sin be of the Devil, do his Work, and favour and serve his Design against God and Mankind, then, I pray, *view your selves under this Consideration*, and see whether it will not startle and amaze you; whether it will not affright you out of your sinful Courses, and turn your liking of them into indignation against them and your selves too. Methinks it should terrifie and confound you to think, that you are the Devil's Children, that you are on his Side, and do his Work, against God, against Christ the only Saviour of the World; against the Good and Welfare of Mankind; and against your Selves, and your own Happiness and Salvation. Is not the Devil hateful to you? Is he

not

not the most accursed Creature; both in the sight of God and Men? Do you not account him your Enemy? Is not he a Murderer and a Destroyer? And will you yet do his Work, and be his Friend and Ally, and the Instrument of his Malice, against God and your selves too?

§. 2. YOU may hence see what *ill Members* open and scandalous Sinners are of any *Kingdom or Society*; for such are the Devil's Friends and Allies, the profess'd Enemies of God and Man. In Wars betwixt Nations, how do we account of those that hold a Correspondence with our Enemies? But much worse are they that are in Confederacy with the Devil against the Son of God, and serve the Cause of *the greatest Enemy* of Mankind.

§. 3. IF all that commit Sin do the Devil's Work, and all that oppose Sin and promote Reformation are on Christ's Side against the Devil, then this is a necessary Consequence, That all that are heartily agreed to serve Christ in his main Design against the Devil, should be *heartily united among themselves*, in
 e 2 mutual

mutual Love and Affection one to another, tho' they differ in many Opinions and Circumstantial Matters that are of small Importance. The reason of this is,

I. BECAUSE all such are *agreed* in far greater things than they can *differ* in. All such are agreed in acknowledging of Christ as their only rightful and supream Sovereign; they are *agreed* to serve the great Design of Christ in this World, against the Devil and his Adherents; they are *agreed* in the principal End they aim at, as the main scope of their Lives and Beings; and they are *agreed* in the principal Means in order to that End; they are *agreed* in the Chief things that make for the Honour of God and the true Happiness and Welfare of Societies in this World, and the Eternal Salvation of Mens Souls: And if they differ in some Opinions and Practices, about Modes and Circumstances, and Ceremonies, these are inconsiderable in comparison of the far greater things that they are agreed in: And therefore all such, notwithstanding their lesser Differences, should mutually love

as Brethren, and encourage and strengthen one anothers Hands in the Service of their *common Lord*.

2. PARTLY, Because all that heartily serve the Design of Christ against the Devil are *agreed* in all things that ever *God made necessary* to the Unity of his Servants and Followers in this World. God knows that there will be some Ignorance, and Error, and Imperfection in the best, while they are in this imperfect State; and therefore he hath laid the Unity of his Servants amongst themselves, on things that are Great, and Necessary, and Plain; and not on any thing that is small, or doubtful, or indifferent; *One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* Again, *not holding the Head from which all the Body by Joints and Bands having Nourishment ministred, are knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.* Whereby he implies, That nothing should disunite the Members one from another, but what separates them from the Head; and that all

Eph. 4. 5, 6.

Col. 2. 19.

that are cordially and sincerely united to the Head, by a lively Faith, should be knit together amongst themselves in Love, and increase therein more and more, as a very Learned Commentator

expounds that, *increaseth*
Dr. Whisby, in loc. with the increase of God;

“ That is, (saith he) in that Love
 “ which he requires and approves, and
 “ which tends to his Glory.

3. AND Partly, Because all that do heartily serve the great Design of Christ against the Devil, *are owned and approved by Christ himself*, as his Servants, as his Friends and Allies; and therefore all such, notwithstanding their different Opinions and Practices in lesser Matters, should love one another as Brethren, as Fellow-Servants, and incourage and strengthen one anothers Hands in the Work of their dear and common Lord :

Receive ye one another as
 Rom. 15. 7. *Christ receives us : And*
 Rom. 14. 1, 2, 3. *him that is weak in the*
Faith receive, but not to doubtful Dispu-
tations : Let not him that eats despise
him that eateth not ; and let not him
that eateth not judge him that eateth, for
 God

God hath received him. Again, I perceive that God is no respecter of Persons, but in every Nation he that feareth God and works Righteousness, is accepted of him. Acts 10. 35.

4. Partly, Because mutual Animosities, Uncharitableness and Estrangement one from another (on account of Differences in lesser Matters) amongst those that heartily are on Christ's Side against the Devil and his Work; this does great *disservice to Christ's Interest*, and gives great *advantage* to the Devil's Cause.

THIS too commonly diverts their Zeal into another Channel, and through the Subtilty and Artifice of the Devil, much of it runs wast, or is ill employ'd against one another, which would do much greater Service if laid out in the common Cause of Christ against the Devil. This weakens their Strength, as an Army not knit together in Love, not resolved to stand by one another, but divided by mutual Jealousies and Suspensions, is never like to do much Service against the common Enemy. This hardens the openly Profane and Impious in their Malignity against Christ,

and Hatred of all his Servants, whilst they see that they foment and keep up Hatred and Animosities amongst themselves. Therefore we should heartily embrace all that are joined with us in the common Cause, in the great Design of Christ against the Devil; and carefully avoid all bitter and intemperate Zeal, that on account of our Differences in lesser and circumstantial matters, would divide us in our Affections, and so weaken our Hands in serving the Interest of our great Lord. You may see how unpleasing this is to Christ, when he rebuk'd the beloved Disciple for his too much factious Zeal for the Followers of his Master as a Party: Saith he, *We* Luk. 9. 49, 50. *saw one casting out Devils in thy Name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not us: But, saith Christ, forbid him not, for he that is not against us is for us.*

§. 4th Use is to *animate and encourage* the Members of these Societies for *Reformation of Manners*, to go on cheerfully, vigorously, and resolvedly in the Design ye are engaged in. What can be a greater encouragement to you than this,

this, that the Design you are engaged in, is, in a subservient way, the very same for which the Son of God was manifested in this World, and which he is still carrying on, as the supream Governor both of the World and of his Church. For encouraging Motives take these that follow.

1. TO serve the design of Christ, in destroying the Work of the Devil, is *highly pleasing* to God. It was God that in his infinite Wisdom and Love, laid the Design of Reforming a Degenerate and Corrupt World: He sent his Son into the World upon this very Errand, and proclaimed from Heaven how much he is *pleased* Matth. 17. 5. with his Undertaking: And the destroying of Sin, and the reforming of the World is called *the pleasure of the Lord*. Isa. 5. 30.

2. TO serve the Design of Christ against the Devil, is what is most for the *Good and Welfare* of Men. It must be acknowledged, that the Design of Christ, in destroying the Work of the Devil, is of all others the greatest Blessing to Mankind. Hence the Angel

gel that first brought the Tydings of his coming into the World, saith, *Fear not, for behold I bring you*

Luke 2. 10.

Tydings of great Joy which shall be to all People: And in what degree soever any do serve and promote this great Design of his, they are so far a Blessing to Mankind.

THE tendency of Reformation, is to recover Men out of the Snare, and from under the power of the Devil; to restore the Nature of Man to its true Dignity and Excellency; to make Man appear like himself, a Godlike Creature, that was deform'd by Sin into the Devil's Likeness: And if it penetrate not so deep as to change the Natures of Men into the *Divine* Likeness, yet even an outward Reformation is very desirable, as it makes Men Look and Act like *Rational* and *Intelligent* Creatures, that by *Luxury*, *Intemperance*, and other *Bruitish* Lusts, seem'd to have little of a Man left but the outward Shape. In a word, Reformation truly tends to the Temporal and Eternal Good of Men: to the Ease, and Quiet, and Freedom of the Mind; to the Health and Strength

Strength and Welfare of the Body ; to the Order, Peace and Prosperity of Families ; to the Honour and Reputation, the Riches and Strength, the Peace and Concord, the Good Order and Government, the Safety and Happiness of the whole Community : *Righteousness exalts a Nation, but Sin is a reproach to any People.* Prov. 14. 34.

And this it doth both by a *Natural* and *Moral* Efficiency. *Naturally*, as it truly tends in its own Nature to these Blessings ; and to kill, at least to wither, the bitter and poisonous Root, from whence all Evil and Mischief does naturally spring. And *Morally*, as it diverts or prevents the Judgments of God, and procures his Blessing upon Persons, and Families, and Nations : *Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings, cease to do evil, learn to do well ; if ye be willing and obedient ye shall eat the good of the Land. Let the People praise thee, O God, let all the People praise thee ; then shall the Earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us.* Isa. 1. 16, 19. Psal. 67. 5, 6.

3. TO serve the design of Christ in destroying the Work of the Devil, is *highly honourable*; what can be more so? than as the Apostle's phrase is, *to be workers together with Christ*, in destroying the Devil's Work, in defeating his malicious Design against God and Man; in saving Men from Sin, and so from Death and Hell.

THE least Subserviency in such a Work as this, is honourable to the greatest Men in the World. If those are deservedly Honoured, that vindicate Men's Civil Liberties, when they are enslaved, or in danger of it, and deliver them from the unjust Tyranny and Oppression of Men; much more then are those Honourable, that are instrumental to deliver Men from the Slavery of Sin and the Tyranny of Satan. God accounts such Honourable: *Those that*

Honour me I will Honour:
 1 Sam. 2. 30.

And all good Men will Love and Honour you, for the Braveness and Nobleness of your Spirits, in standing up for God and a Publick Good, and opposing your selves to stem the Current, when Vice and Profaneness,

ness, by the Number and Quality of its Abettors, threatned to bear down all before it. Self-preservation will engage many to apprehend a Thief or a Murderer, that yet can hear the sacred Name of God blasphemed, and see his Authority and Laws despised and trampled on, and not be moved at it: But those are truly Noble Spirits, that are concerned for God's Honour, when no Interest of their own is endanger'd thereby.

4. THE Work of Reformation is a design that *none will be against you in*, but the *Devil* and his *Adherents*, who are the profess'd Enemies of God and Mankind, while you keep in your proper Stations, and within the bounds of the Law; and manage your Reforming Design by the Christian Rules of Love, Justice and Prudence: All that are against you in so doing, do declare themselves to be on the Devil's Side, against the Son of God: And all good Men will wish you *God Speed*, and assist you all they can by their Prayers and Endeavours.

5. THE

5. THE serving the design of Christ in destroying the Work of the Devil, is a Design for which both the *present and the coming Generation will rise up and call you blessed.* The *present* Generation is sensible of many good Effects of your Undertaking ; for Vice and Profaneness is not altogether at that Height of Impudence and Barefacedness as some time it was, much less is it at that Height as it would have been, had none offer'd themselves to oppose the threatening Growth of it : And if God turned away his Wrath from *Israel* for the sake of *Phineas's* *executing Judgment* on two notorious Offenders, then all good Men must conclude, that your Endeavours have had no small hand in preventing many *National* Judgments that we had Cause to fear, and in procuring many *National* Blessings ; for most signal Blessings have been by Heaven vouchsafed to this Nation since the Beginning of your Undertakings, *viz.* the late Revolution, with the many great Blessings that did attend it : And after two dissolute Reigns, under whose Shadow Popery and Profaneness did grow up together

together to a threatenng Height, we have had two Sovereigns successively, viz. the late King *William* of Glorious Memory, and our present *Gracious Queen*; Both zealous Asserters of our Religion and Liberties; and Both zealous Promoters of Reformation of Manners.

AND besides all this, while there is Life and Vigour in your Endeavours for Reformation, that is one of the most promising Signs or Indications that God has more *Mercy* yet in *store* for us; for Christ certainly will never desert, or leave, or give up a People, while there are any Number that do heartily serve his great Design in the World.

AND for the *coming* Generation, we shall likely hand down to them many valuable Blessings both Civil and Spiritual, which the growth of Vice threatened to strip the present Generation of, so that they must never have known them. However, had there not been some such Endeavours as yours, to stop the Growth of Vice in the present Age, in all likelihood Vertue would have been

been quite lost in the following Age ; like a Path long disused, that it would have been very difficult to find any Foot-steps of it.

AND if the Name and Memory of our first Reformers, in Matters of Doctrine and Worship, be so deservedly precious to us at this Day, then those that destroy the Devil's Works of Profaneness and Immorality, cannot fail being very precious to late Posterity, with all that truly love Vertue and serious Godliness.

6. THE serving of Christ, in destroying the Work of the Devil, is a Design that you will *be sure to succeed in* ; for the Son of God will Conquer in his Undertaking : *He must Reign till he has put all his Enemies under his Feet.* He has already in his own Person *spoiled Principalities and Powers, and made a shew of them openly* ; drag'd all the Infernal Legions at the Wheels of his triumphant Chariot. And he will be Victorious over the Devil in his Servants too : *He will tread down Satan under their Feet. He shall not fail nor*

be

*be discourag'd, till he has set
Judgment in the Earth.* Isa. 42. 4:

7. **BUT** however it be as to Success, those that sincerely serve his Design against the Devil, he will not fail to reward them an hundred fold in this World, and in the World to come with Life Everlasting. What he saith of himself with respect to his own Work, may truly be apply'd to all in their measure, that heartily serve him in his great Design. *Tho' Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God my strength.* Isa. 49. 5:

8. **THEREFORE** to serve the Design of Christ against the Devil, is a Work well worthy of every one to lay out himself to the utmost in. Consider, the destroying the Work of the Devil in this World was that, which God had in his eye from Eternity, and laid the design of it in his infinite Wisdom and Counsel, It was for this that the Son of God humbled himself, and took upon him the form of a Servant: It was for this, that he Conversed so many Years with Men in this World; that

he Preached, and wrought Miracles, and underwent so much Suffering and Reproach, and at last laid down his precious Life for it. Surely then the greatest Men on Earth cannot think it below their Character to be Instruments in so great a Design; and sure none can, I'm sure no true Friend and Lover of Christ will, think his Pains, his Time and Strength, his Money and Interest too much to be laid out in that Design for which the Son of God laid down his Life.

9. A N D do not think that it is a Free-will Offering, for at your own choice, whether you will serve Christ in destroying the Work of the Devil or not. No, it is an *indispensible Duty* incumbent on all that truly love Christ, and own him for their Lord, and hope themselves to be saved by him. This all the Servants of Christ are bound to by their Baptismal Vow, that is, both *Sacramentum Militiae*, or Military Obligation, whereby we oblige ourselves to fight for Christ against the Devil, and the Son of God shall direct you only in two Words: *Thou shalt be sure first to destroy the Work of the Devil in your own*

own Hearts and Lives. This is absolutely necessary on many accounts in those that endeavour the Reformation of others: This will make you *sincere* in your Undertaking; this will inspire you with a true *Zeal* and hearty Concern for the Success of your Work; this, as a Law in the Heart, will be always at hand to *direct* you in the true Christian Methods of managing of it: This will fortify you with *Patience* and *Courage*, and *Resolution* against the Difficulties you are like to meet with in it: This will help you to *slight* and despise the unjust Reproaches and Railery of those Fools that make a Mock at Sin, and a Jest of serious Godliness; This will contribute much to the *Success* of your Work, and in great measure *stop* the Mouths of Gainfayers and Revilers, when they cannot charge you with indulging or countenancing any of those evil Works in your selves, which you seek to destroy in others.

1 Pet. 3. 16.

2. A S it is Christ's Work that you are doing, see that you *imitate* the Frame and Temper of his Spirit, in Love, Meek-

Meekness and Compassion ; in Zeal for God's Honour, and a true Love and Compassion to the Persons of Sinners, and desire of their Welfare, while you apply the greatest Severities that the Law provides against their Sin. And in so doing God will be with you, and the Pleasure of the Lord will prosper in your Hands: And the Son of God, whose Work you do, whose Cause you favour and promote against the Devil and his Work, will at last say, *Well done good and faithful Servants, you have been faithful in a little, and*
Matth. 25. 21. I will make you Rulers over many things.

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F I N I S.

